

Memphis Animal Shelter Advisory Board Meeting

April 8, 2015

Present: Dr. Stephen Tower, Chairman; Jill Madajczyk, Member; Jeanne Chancellor, Secretary; Taurus Bailey, Member; Jake Hayes, City Attorney's Office; James Rogers, Administrator, Memphis Animal Services

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Tower.

Mr. Rogers presented his Power Point presentation for the public present. Mr. Rogers presented the special events during March 2015. He also announced that the shelter has had delivered three new vans for the Animal Control Officers. These new vans have the capacity to transport 12 animals. Two more vans are on order to be delivered soon.

Mr. Rogers announced that for three consecutive months the live release rate was greater than the euthanasia rate. He told us that the intake was down which is also true in Collierville and Bartlett. He attributes one of the reasons for decreased intake is the increase of spay/neuter in the community.

Dr. Tower asked about the staffing in the veterinary clinic at the Shelter. Mr. Rogers stated that the clinic needs more help, and the City is working on getting the clinic more help. He stated that more money is needed for hiring technicians for the clinic. He stated there are fifteen technician positions authorized. Currently three of these positions are not filled, and hopefully will be soon.

Dr. Tower asked if the new vans are climate controlled. Mr. Rogers stated that new vans have heat and air conditioning for the animals on board.

Dr. Tower asked the current status of spay/neuter of the adopted/rescued animals. Mr. Rogers reported that the surgeries were behind. The clinic is currently working on animals from April sixth. There are about 40 surgeries on the books needing completion. April 9th there should be an extra vet at the shelter to assist in surgeries to help get the surgeries to date. Mr. Rogers said that the increase of the live release rate puts the surgeries behind.

Jeanne Chancellor asked about making an effort to get the animals available for adoption sterilized and ready to leave the shelter when adopted. Ms. Chancellor stated that when the change of hours was announced the number one reason given by Mr. Rogers was to help the clinic keep up with surgeries and have the adoptable animals ready to leave the shelter when adopted. Ms. Chancellor stated that as far as she knew there had not been a move in this direction. The clinic has stayed behind rather than getting ahead in surgeries.

Jill Madajczyk asked if it had been considered to release animals to approved rescues without spay/neuter surgery. Ms. Madajczyk stated this would help relieve some of the surgery back-up and help keep cages empty for more dogs to move through the shelter system.

Jill also asked about having the public pre-pay for surgery at private veterinary clinics. When the Shelter had received confirmation that the payment had been made, the animal could be released to the adopter to be spayed/neutered at the private veterinary office. This should really help relieve the backup that is currently happening on a regular basis.

A motion was made by Jill Madajczyk and seconded by Jeanne Chancellor

Approved rescue groups and individuals who prepay for spay neuter at a private veterinary clinic be allowed to adopt and take home the same day pets from Memphis Animal Services. These pets would then be spayed/neutered at a private veterinary practice. The City would reserve the right to check and make sure the surgery is performed in a timely manner.

The motion was passed.

Jeanne Chancellor stated that if this policy is accepted by the City the animals would have to stay in the jurisdiction of the Shelter so the Shelter would have control of recovering the animals if needed.

This motion will require a rewriting of the current ordinance covering the Shelter and spay/neuter. Jill Madajczyk and Jake Hayes will work on rewriting the new ordinance for the next meeting.

Jill stated that a form could be created for the veterinarians doing the surgery that would be returned to the City when the surgery had been completed.

Dr. Tower asked Taurus Bailey about his proposal to have approved court hold dogs held in foster care instead of the caged at the Shelter.

Mr. Bailey reported that District Attorney Weirich is on board with the plan. Mr. Bailey proposes that trusted groups be set up to participate in the foster program. These dogs would be held at the Shelter for general assessment and released to foster care when well enough if medical treatment necessary. The procedure for releasing the dogs is currently being created. At the end of the case, when the dog becomes property of the City, the foster individual/rescue organization can take ownership of the animal or it can be returned to the shelter for adoption. Judge Potter would sign the release order. The criteria for releasing these animals is currently being created.

Mr. Rogers introduced Megan Higgins who is with the Mayor's Innovation Team. Ms. Higgins is working with the Shelter on ways to improve.

Jill Madajczyk stated that the Board has no obligation to answer questions from the public. The Board is required to listen to comments and questions, but not required to answer any questions if it prefers not to present a public answer.

The meeting was opened to questions/comments from the public.

Rachel Dobbs asked about TNR programs at MAS. MAS is not participating in any TNR work right now. The last time MAS participated in a program was in 2013 when money was available from the ASPCA.

Heather Sanders asked about the spaying/neutering of animals that are too underweight or too young for the surgery. She brought up the spaying of a puppy ID 275425 who died after surgery on Feb. 27, 2015. Mr. Rogers stated that the policy for surgery is being reviewed by the clinic staff. He would have a report at the next meeting of any changes being made in the spay/neuter decisions.

Sylvia Cox asked about errors in documentation. She handed out documentation of errors made. She asked if the staff has been repeatedly trained in the standard procedures and documentation, why do these errors continue to occur. She asked what steps are taken to correct and/or discipline employees who continue to make these mistakes. Mr. Rogers stated that the staff is being continually monitored for mistakes in input, and corrected when mistakes are found. He stated there had not been an euthanasia mistake made recently due to the diligence of the staff making notes in the computer.

Cindy Sanders asked about the intake numbers dropping for Animal Control Officers. She noted that there had been two new ACOs hired when the intake was dropping. She had been over the records and noted a drop in the animals being picked up on the street by officers. She used as an example May 22, 2015. There were 8 strays picked up by Animal Control officers and 65 animals that had come in through the intake area at the shelter, animals being brought in by the public. Mr. Rogers stated that one day was not a good example of the officer's work. The officers are doing their work as assigned and it is not always reflected on paper. Ms. Sanders also asked why Dr. Coleman was at the Collierville shelter on Tuesdays when she should be available at MAS to help keep the spay/neuter surgeries up to date. Dr. Tower inserted that the change in hours has seemed to put the spay/neuter surgeries more behind rather than there be an improvement. Mr. Rogers said that the scheduling of the vets at the shelter is being looked at and there should be some changes in 90 days.

Jackie Johns asked about new court procedures for Division 2 and Division 14. Mr. Rogers stated he was not sure, but would check and report back at the next meeting.

Matt Fumich asked about the definition of "work day" and the holding days for a stray animal. This was discussed in October. Jill Majaczyk reported that there is no definition of a "work day" available in the laws in Tn.

Jan Courtney asked about the current missing animal status at the Shelter. Dr. Tower asked Mr. Rogers if the missing animal number had been taken down to zero as discussed several times by the Board. Mr. Rogers reported it had been set at zero the first of Jan. The information about the animals is still in the system at the Shelter, but the number started at zero at the beginning of the year. There are currently two missing animals. One is known to have escaped through a hole in the fence, and it had not been recovered yet.

Michelle Austin asked about the feeding schedule on the days the shelter hours are reduced on Sundays and Mondays. Mr. Rogers reported that the dogs are fed between 7 – 8 am and 2 – 3- pm regardless of the hours the shelter is open. The animals are fed these hours seven days a week.

Dana Frederick asked if we are making any progress having a low kill shelter, and she are adoption events starting up again? Mr. Rogers stated that we are making progress and the adoption numbers keep going up and the euthanasia numbers down. Adoption events are happening at Petco Bartlett the second Saturday of every month.

Linda Baxter asked about the posting of the minutes of the Advisory Board on the website for the City. Jeanne Chancellor replied that this is handled through the Division of Parks and Neighborhood and they would be the one to contact for an answer. She stated the minutes are a behind due to lack of quorum not being present.

Paula Butts asked why the public is not allowed to adopt from the stray area. Mr. Rogers stated that the public can adopt from the stray area, but must be escorted to the area as there are sometimes animals in stray that are aggressive.

Heather Sanders asked why MAS turned down a donation from a vet office recently. Mr. Rogers stated he was not aware of this refusal, and he would check on this.

Teresa Gifford asked about sedation in the euthanasia room. She wanted to know if there had been progress on the sedation of all animals being euthanized. Mr. Rogers stated that animals are given sedation drugs on an as needed basis. Dr. Tower stated that the drugs that would be the most effective are not available at the present time at MAS for general use.

Jeanne Chancellor made a motion to adjourn the meeting due to time. The motion was seconded by Jill Madajczyk. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeanne Chancellor , Secretary